

the condition of education 2007



INDICATOR 28

Degrees Earned by Women

The indicator and corresponding tables are taken directly from *The Condition of Education 2007*. Therefore, the page numbers may not be sequential.

Additional information about the survey data and supplementary notes can be found in the full report. For a copy of *The Condition of Education 2007*, visit the NCES website (<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2007064>) or contact ED PUBs at 1-877-4ED-PUBS.

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Completions

Degrees Earned by Women

Women have earned a greater percentage of bachelor's degrees than men since the early 1980s overall, but men still earn a greater percentage in some fields, including computer and information sciences and engineering.

Women earn a greater number and proportion of bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees than they did 25 years ago. Between 1979–80 and 2004–05, the percentage of bachelor's degrees earned by women increased from 49 to 57 percent. This indicator examines the change in the percentage of degrees earned by women between 1979–80 and 2004–05, by selected fields of study.

While women have earned more than half of all bachelor's degrees awarded since 1981–82 (NCES 2007-017, table 246), the percentage of bachelor's degrees awarded in particular fields of study has varied. For example, although women earned 87 percent of the degrees awarded in health professions in 2004–05, they earned less than a quarter of the bachelor's degrees awarded in the fields of computer/information sciences (22 percent) and engineering and engineering technologies (18 percent). Women also earned fewer degrees than men in the fields of agriculture/natural resources (48 percent), mathematics and statistics (45 percent), and physical sciences and science technologies (42 percent).

Between 1979–80 and 2004–05, the percentage of master's degrees earned by women increased from 49 to 59 percent (see supplemental table 28-1). The percentage of master's degrees awarded to women in particular fields of study has also varied, and there are still fields with large differences by sex. For example, in 2004–05, while women earned 79 percent of the master's degrees awarded in psychology, they earned 23 percent of the master's degrees awarded in engineering and engineering technologies.

Women earned just under half of the doctoral degrees awarded in 2004–05 (49 percent), an increase from the 30 percent of doctoral degrees awarded to women in 1979–80. At the doctoral level in 2004–05, men earned more degrees than women in more fields than they did at the bachelor's and master's levels. Women earned less than 30 percent of the doctoral degrees awarded in 2004–05 in mathematics and statistics, physical sciences and science technologies, computer/information sciences, and engineering and engineering technologies.

¹ Includes other fields not shown separately.

NOTE: Based on data from Title IV degree-granting institutions. See *supplemental note 9* for more detail. The shaded section shows fields in which women earned at least 50 percent of the degrees in 2004–05. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Some estimates were revised from previous publications.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). *Digest of Education Statistics, 2006* (NCES 2007-017), tables 258, 279, 281, 283–287, 289, 292–294, 296, 298, and 300; data from U.S. Department of Education, NCES, 1979–80 Higher Education General Information Survey (HEGIS), “Degrees and Other Formal Awards Conferred”; and 1989–90, 1999–2000, and 2004–05 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, “Completions Survey” (IPEDS-C:87 and Fall 2000 and 2005), and Fall 2005.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
Supplemental Notes 3, 9, 10
Supplemental Table 28-1
NCES 2007-017



BACHELOR'S DEGREES: Percentage of bachelor's degrees earned by women and change in the percentage earned by women, by field of study: Selected years, 1979–80 through 2004–05

Field of study	Change in percentage points between			
	1979–80	1989–90	1999–2000	2004–05
Total¹	49.0	53.2	57.2	57.4
Health professions and related clinical sciences	82.3	84.6	83.5	86.5
Education	73.8	78.1	75.8	78.7
Psychology	63.3	71.6	76.5	77.8
English language/literature/letters	65.1	67.0	67.8	68.5
Communication, journalism, and related programs	52.3	60.5	61.2	64.2
Biological and biomedical sciences	42.1	50.8	58.2	61.9
Visual and performing arts	63.2	62.0	59.2	61.3
Social sciences and history	43.6	44.2	51.2	50.5
Business	33.6	46.8	49.8	50.0
Agriculture/natural resources	29.6	31.6	42.9	47.9
Mathematics and statistics	42.3	46.2	47.8	44.7
Physical sciences and science technologies	23.7	31.3	40.3	42.2
Computer/information sciences	30.2	29.9	28.1	22.2
Engineering and engineering technologies	9.4	14.1	18.6	18.3

Degrees Earned by Women

Table 28-1. Number and percentage of bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees earned by women and change in the percentage earned by women, by field of study: Selected years, 1979–80 through 2004–05

Field of study	1979–80		1989–90		1999–2000		2004–05		Change in percentage points between 1979–80 and 2004–05
	Percent		Percent		Percent		Percent		
	Number	of total	Number	of total	Number	of total	Number	of total	
Bachelor's degrees									
Total ¹	455,800	49.0	559,600	53.2	707,500	57.2	826,300	57.4	8.4
Health professions and related clinical sciences	52,500	82.3	49,900	84.6	67,500	83.5	69,800	86.5	4.3
Education	87,100	73.8	82,100	78.1	81,900	75.8	82,900	78.7	4.8
Psychology	26,700	63.3	38,600	71.6	56,700	76.5	66,600	77.8	14.5
English language/literature/letters	21,000	65.1	31,400	67.0	34,000	67.8	37,200	68.5	3.4
Communication, journalism, and related programs	15,000	52.3	31,200	60.5	34,900	61.2	48,300	64.2	11.9
Biological and biomedical sciences	19,400	42.1	18,900	50.8	36,700	58.2	40,000	61.9	19.8
Visual and performing arts	25,800	63.2	24,700	62.0	34,800	59.2	49,600	61.3	-1.9
Social sciences and history	45,200	43.6	52,200	44.2	65,000	51.2	79,200	50.5	6.9
Business	62,600	33.6	116,300	46.8	127,500	49.8	155,600	50.0	16.3
Agriculture/natural resources	6,800	29.6	4,100	31.6	10,400	42.9	11,000	47.9	18.3
Mathematics and statistics	4,800	42.3	6,600	46.2	5,500	47.8	6,400	44.7	2.4
Physical sciences and science technologies	5,500	23.7	5,000	31.3	7,400	40.3	8,000	42.2	18.5
Computer/information sciences	3,400	30.2	8,200	29.9	10,600	28.1	12,000	22.2	-8.1
Engineering and engineering technologies	6,500	9.4	11,600	14.1	13,700	18.6	14,600	18.3	8.9
Master's degrees									
Total ¹	147,300	49.4	170,600	52.6	265,300	58.0	341,000	59.3	9.9
Psychology	5,800	58.8	7,400	68.5	11,900	75.7	14,900	79.3	20.5
Health professions and related clinical sciences	11,300	73.6	15,900	78.0	33,100	77.7	36,900	79.0	5.4
Education	71,500	70.2	64,400	75.9	94,000	76.4	128,600	76.8	6.6
English language/literature/letters	3,800	63.8	4,200	66.4	4,700	67.0	5,900	69.1	5.3
Communication, journalism, and related programs	1,600	50.5	2,600	60.8	3,500	63.3	4,700	64.8	14.3
Biological and biomedical sciences	2,300	36.2	2,400	49.2	3,700	53.8	4,900	59.5	23.3
Visual and performing arts	4,600	53.3	4,800	56.3	6,200	57.2	7,500	57.2	3.9
Agriculture/natural resources	900	22.5	1,100	33.8	2,000	46.0	2,500	51.8	29.3
Social sciences and history	4,400	36.0	4,700	40.7	7,000	50.1	8,700	51.3	15.3
Mathematics and statistics	1,000	36.1	1,500	40.1	1,500	45.5	2,000	43.6	7.5
Business	12,300	22.3	26,100	34.0	44,500	39.9	60,500	42.4	20.1
Physical sciences and science technologies	1,000	18.5	1,400	26.1	1,700	35.3	2,200	39.1	20.6
Computer/information sciences	800	20.9	2,700	28.1	5,000	33.4	5,300	28.7	7.7
Engineering and engineering technologies	1,200	7.3	3,500	14.0	5,600	21.1	8,000	22.7	15.4

See notes at end of table.

Degrees Earned by Women

Table 28-1. Number and percentage of bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees earned by women and change in the percentage earned by women, by field of study: Selected years, 1979–80 through 2004–05—Continued

Field of study	1979–80		1989–90		1999–2000		2004–05		Change in percentage points between 1979–80 and 2004–05
	Number	Percent of total	Number	Percent of total	Number	Percent of total	Number	Percent of total	
Doctoral degrees									
Total¹	9,700	29.7	14,000	36.4	19,800	44.1	25,700	48.8	19.1
Psychology	1,500	43.4	2,200	58.9	3,200	67.7	3,600	71.3	27.9
Health professions and related clinical sciences	400	43.1	800	56.2	1,300	64.9	4,200	70.9	27.7
Education	3,200	43.9	3,700	57.3	4,100	64.2	5,100	66.7	22.8
English language/literature/letters	600	46.9	500	55.0	900	58.4	700	59.2	12.3
Communication, journalism, and related programs	100	37.3	100	46.7	200	52.9	300	58.3	21.0
Visual and performing arts	200	36.9	400	44.4	600	52.4	700	53.5	16.6
Biological and biomedical sciences	900	25.5	1,400	36.8	2,300	44.3	2,700	49.0	23.5
Social sciences and history	900	27.0	1,000	32.9	1,700	41.2	1,600	42.8	15.8
Business	100	15.3	300	25.2	400	32.0	600	39.9	24.6
Agriculture/natural resources	100	11.3	300	19.8	400	31.3	400	35.0	23.7
Mathematics and statistics	100	13.8	200	17.8	300	25.3	300	28.5	14.7
Physical sciences and science technologies	400	12.3	800	19.1	1,000	25.3	1,100	27.9	15.6
Computer/information sciences	#	11.3	100	14.8	100	16.8	200	19.1	7.9
Engineering and engineering technologies	100	3.9	500	9.0	800	15.5	1,200	18.7	14.8

Rounds to zero.

¹ Includes other fields not shown separately.

NOTE: See *supplemental note 10* for more information on fields of study. Figures are based on data from Title IV degree-granting institutions. The shaded sections show fields in which women earned at least 50 percent of the degrees in 2004–05. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Some estimates were revised from previous publications.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. *Digest of Education Statistics, 2006* (NCES 2007-017), tables 258, 279, 281, 283–287, 289, 292–294, 296, 298, and 300; data from U.S. Department of Education, NCES, 1979–80 Higher Education General Information Survey (HEGIS), “Degrees and Other Formal Awards Conferred”; and 1989–90, 1999–2000, and 2004–05 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, “Completions Survey” (IPEDS–C:87 and Fall 2000 and 2005), and Fall 2005.